

THE DEONTIC MODAL EXPRESSIONS IN SHABAKI

Abstract: The present paper aims to identify the deontic modal expressions in Shabaki and to describe their semantic interpretations and means of expression. The corpus is based on the data excerpted from everyday communication. They were observed to fall into two types: directives (deontic possibility, deontic necessity, prohibition, advice and recommendation) and commissives (promises and threats). They were also categorized along formality and politeness scales. These expressions in Shabaki cover a very wide range of deontic meaning. Formally, they regularly tend to appear at the beginning of the Shabaki sentence.

KEY WORDS: Shabaki, modality, event, deontic, directives, commissive

1 Introduction

Deontic modality (from Greek: deon, meaning 'duty') concerns what is necessary, permissible, or obligatory, given a body of law or a set of moral principles or the like (cf Kearns, 2000: 53). Palmer (1974:100-103;1988:98) characterizes deontic modality as 'discourse-oriented' to reflect possible deontic sources it may be linked with. It is described as performative: deontic modals are used to impose obligation, give permission or make a promise or in some other way influence or direct the behavior

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Therefore, it is necessary for the purpose of this paper to determine the particular features, meanings and forms related to deontic modality expressions in Shabaki. In view of this, the paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What linguistic forms do Shabaki people use to express deontic meaning?
2. How does the use of these expressions vary with negation? And whenever possible
3. How does the use of these expressions get affected by tense and aspect?

The paper is built up as follows. Section 2 gives an overview of Shabaki language. Section 3 is devoted to the classification of deontic modal expressions in Shabaki. Sections 4 will draw some conclusions.

2. Background to Shabaki

The word Shabaki refers to the language of the Shabaki people. It is an Indo-European language of the Indo-Iranian branch spoken mainly in the eastern region of Mosul province in Iraq. Shabaki is mostly described as a Zaza-Goran dialect of northwestern Kurdish language of the Indo-Iranian family. Still very few researchers claim that Shabaki people are shabankara (or shawankara) Kurds of Fars district in Iran. The Median branch of modern Iranian northwest includes Zaza-Dimli, Gorani, Gaspian dialects, south Tati, Hawramani

of the addressee (Palmer 1988: 96-98 and 1990: 69-72). Thus, the event modified by the modal is immediate to the act of speech. Deontic modality, like epistemic modality, is discourse-oriented.¹

Modality is a semantic category used to reveal different degrees of speaker's opinion or attitude toward a proposition (Palmer 1986:5). Palmer (2001) distinguishes the modality into two major types, propositional and event modality. The former is generally related with the judgment made by the speaker toward the proposition, including epistemic modality which 'expresses speaker's judgment about the factual status of the proposition' and evidential modality which 'indicates the evidence speaker has'. The latter refers to the attitude of the speaker toward a potential future event, including deontic modality which 'relates to obligation (it is necessary or recommendable that the proposition be carried out) or permission (the addressee is allowed to carry out the proposition), emanating from an external source' or volition (the speaker or subject sees it as desirable that the proposition be carried out) and dynamic modality which 'relates to ability or willingness coming from the individual concerned.'

The rationale behind this study is the fact that languages vary greatly with respect to the meanings of modal expressions and the degree of grammaticalization of the modality system.

permission (i.e. deontic possibility), prohibition, obligation (i.e. deontic necessity), and advice and recommendation. The common denominator among these the subtypes of directives is the fact that they all emanate from the speaker or a compelling social constraint. Commissives include promises and threats. The speaker of these acts guarantees that the action mentioned in the proposition will take place.

3.1. Permission (deontic possibility)

In deontic utterances, the speaker grants or asks for permission to act out the proposition of the utterance. Words of permission in Shabaki (e.g., *mâsti*, *mârzi*, *matâwi* and *razâm handâ* /have permission) are used to express causation (Sultan, 2010). Shabaki has a set of constructions which is used to request (or give) a permission. This set includes using interrogatives, as in (1b – 1e), or using imperatives, as in (1g), or using conditional sentences which consist of the conditional part followed by an imperative part, as in (1h).

In (1), it is the speaker who grants the permission, and the subject of the sentence ‘Ali’ is to perform the action expressed by the main predicate ‘come’. The expression ‘*blâ*’ which literally means ‘let’ or ‘permitted to’ is used to give permission in present and future. It is often used to give permission to a third person. The modal expression in (1a) indicates that somebody (i.e. Ali) receives permission, or is given the option to act on a proposition.

(or Horami) and Shabaki dialects (cf Izady 1992).

Shabaki has a complex morphology. Like German, the constituent order is syntactically SOV; i.e. predominantly verb-final like most of its Indo-Iranian sisters. However, it does not adhere to a strict word order and sentence components may occur in various positions in the clause, depending on focusing and topicality. This is especially the case for prepositional phrases and adverbials. Like Turkish, Japanese or Finnish, Shabaki is an agglutinating language (with some fusion) where morphemes have single semantic meanings and are simply connected linearly (*yâna.gal.mân*: house.s.our: our houses). If the subject is an NP, it is cross referenced on V1. If it is a pronoun, then it is expressed on V1. Subsequent verbs are usually marked with the same pronominal vowel suffix. The most striking feature of this language is the presence of complex predicates, such as light verb constructions and serial verb onomatopoeic constructions which are very productive (Sultan, 2010 & 2011).

3. Deontic modality in Shabaki

This section will investigate in some detail the types and behavior of deontic modal expressions in Shabaki and whenever possible and interesting with respect to negation. Deontic modality covers directive modal expressions and commissive modal expressions. Directives include

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Can.2SG permit.PRES.2SG.NOM.1SG.ACC
go.BASE.1SG doctor?

Do you permit me to visit the doctor?

Unlike all modal expressions in (1a) through (1d) which are heavy verbs, the expression ‘razâ handâ’ is a light verb construction and it is as polite as the expressions in (1b & 1c).

(1) e. Razâ-t hand-â bali duxtar?

Permission.2SG have.PRES.2SG.NOM.
go.BASE.1SG doctor?

Will you give me the permission to go to the doctor?

(1) f. Bor-i sây-e?

Eat.PRES-1SG apple-INDEF?

Can I eat an apple?

(1) g. Aga mago-t bor-i sây-e, zi-ba bo!

If want.PRES-2SG eat-2SG apple-INDEF, fast-
BE.PRES come.INF

If you want to eat an apple, come fast!

It should be noted that a command-type reading and a permission-type reading are somehow ambiguous. In shabaki, there are no formal markings to disambiguate this distinction. In all above sentences, the verbs of permission ‘to have permission’ imply the existence of external permitters and are therefore modals with deontic

(1) a. Ali blâ bay-o yâna-mân. 2&3

Ali.NOM permitted to come.PRES.3SG house-
1SG.POSS

Ali can come to our house.

‘Blâ’ indicates that the speaker is giving permission to the addressee to carry out the proposition expressed in the utterance.

(1) b. Mâst-i-m bal-i duxtar?

Permit.PRES.2SG.NOM.1SG.ACC
go.BASE.1SG doctor?

Do you permit me to visit the doctor?

(1) c. Mârz-i-m bal-i duxtar?

Permit.PRES.2SG.NOM.1SG.ACC
go.BASE.1SG doctor?

Do you permit me to visit the doctor?

In (1b) through (1d), the notion expressed is virtually the same. The difference between (1b) and (1c) lies only in the degree of formality: ‘mâsti’ is considered in most contexts to be more formal than ‘mârzi’. ‘Matâwi’ in (1d), on the other hand, by virtue of being less insisting or urging, is conventionally interpreted as being more polite. It combines ability and permission simultaneously in one sentence to express the highest degree of politeness and formality as shown in (1d) below.

(1) d. Matâw-i bâst-im bali duxtar?

3.2. Prohibition

The present section intends to present some devices which express prohibitive meaning in Shabaki. A striking observation is that Shabaki lacks any specific modal verb to indicate prohibition. In (4) negation of the proposition is used to denote prohibition which is absolute in the sense that the addressee must take care not to perform the action. In (5) the addressee is not allowed to perform the action in the proposition. The verb 'mâsti' is polysemous in Shabaki and it is mainly used in causative constructions in its positive form. When negated, it expresses prohibition of the action through the denial of the permission and denotes the addressor's social biasness to addressee's interest. Sentence in (5) may, for instance, be uttered by a mother during her son's exam. Necessity not to perform an action in (6) or to perform it in (7) may be used in two senses: advice and prohibition. In both senses, they express the speaker's social obligation or responsibility towards the addressee.

(4) Na-bar-a i-wâyiri. (negative imperative/
command not to/ prohibition)

Neg-take-2SG this-wire.

Do not take this wire!

(5) Na-mâst-i bakâz-i topa. (prohibitive)

Neg-permit-1SG play-2SG football.

I do not permit you play football.

readings. It is noteworthy that (1g) can have an invitation reading.

The replies (giving permission) to above requests are can be one of the following:

(2) a. Razâ-m handâ bali duxtar.

Permission.ACC-1SG.NOM have.PRES go.INF
doctor.

I allow you to visit the doctor.

(2) b. Matâw-i bali duxtar.

Able-2SG.ACC go.INF doctor.

You can visit the doctor.

(2) c. Bal-a duxtar.

Go-2SG doctor.

Visit the doctor.

(2) d. Aga mago-t, bal-a.

If want-2SG, go-2SG.

If you like, you can go.

In (2d), permission clause is the main clause of the conditional sentence. In (3) the causative verb 'hâst' is used to give permission.

(3) Ali hâst-as bal-i yâna-sân.

Ali.NOM permit-PST.3SG go-INF-1SG.ACC
home-3PL.

Ali permitted me to visit their house.

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(8) b. Di bor-a sâ-y-e day!

Come on! Eat.PRES-1SG apple-INDEF

Have an apple, please.

‘Di’ and ‘di ... day’ are encouragement particles in Shabaki to comply with the obligations issued by the addressor. ‘Di ... day’ lays a stronger social obligation on the obligee (the agent) than does the particle ‘di.’

‘Lâzam’ and ‘majbur’, which are borrowed from Arabic, are used to convey deontic necessity or obligation in Shabaki. The modal, ‘lâzam’, indicates that the proposition is in accordance with some norm or is willed by someone. In its deontic sense in Shabaki, “lâzam” is used both in affirmative and negative sentences, expressing obligation (9) and prohibition (10a) respectively.

(9) Lâzam bal-i yâna zi.

Must go.PRES-2SG home early.

You must go home early.

In (9), s/he as a subject has an obligation to do some action which is “taking medicine”. Thus, in this sentence the modal “lâzam” (must) has a root, deontic reading because the obligation is emanating from an external source.

Negation in Shabaki has both wide and narrow scope over the certain modals. In the following Shabaki sentences, the negative marker na- can

(6) Lâzam ça hiro na-kar-I het. (Necessity not to)

Must from memory Neg-do.LV yourself.

You must not forget yourself.

(7) Gawra-gal lâzam xâs bâ ça-ni hirdi-gal-i. (Necessity to)

Old.PL must good be with little-PL-DEF

Old people must treat the young well.

To sum up, there is no prohibitive verb meaning ‘forbid’ or ‘prohibit’ in Shabaki but in stead negated permission verb ‘mâst’ is used for this very purpose.

3.3. Obligation (deontic necessity)

The concept of obligation involves two active participants: the obligor and obligee. The obligor lays moral or social obligation on the obligee (agent) to perform some action or behave in some way. Obligation in Shabaki can be expressed by three modal expressions, ‘di’, ‘di ... day’, “lâzam”, and ‘majbur’. Deontic “lâzam” indicates that the addressee is subjected to an absolute demand. The least obligation force is expressed in the proposition preceded by ‘di’. The sentence in (8a) has a weaker obligation force than (8b).

(8) a. Di bor-a sâ-y-e!

Come on! Eat.PRES-2SG apple-INDEF

Have an apple, please.

Deontic ‘majbur bi /kar’ (to be obliged/ to oblige) indicates that the addressee is subjected to an absolute demand. According to Teleman et al. (1999:308-311), the source of such a demand can be rules, custom, or general practicality. More often than not, ‘majbur’ with this interpretation is subject-oriented, i.e. it is the (animate) subject that is usually expected to comply with the demand expressed in an utterance. In other words, the utterance is interpreted as directed deontic.

In (13), the speaker has authority over the addressee, and the addressee is in control of the action described in the proposition. This, however, does not rule out non-directed deontic interpretations in certain contexts.

(13) a. Majbur-a-nâ darmân bor-i ba waxta.

Obliged-BE-1SG medicine drink-1SG on time-3SG.

I am obliged to have my medicine on time.

(13) b. Jabr-am kard Ali darmân bor-o ba waxt-as.

Oblige-1SG do.PST Ali medicine drink-3SG on time-3SG. Subj-eat-3 rd sg.

I obliged Ali to take the medicine on time.

The word ‘majbur’ is used in both causative and non-causative senses. In (13a), ‘majbur’ refers to an internal obligation. In (13b) the speaker obliges Ali who is sick and needs to take medicine to

be attached to either modal or the main verb. The position of negation seems to affect the interpretation of the sentence. In (10), negative marker na- attaches to the main verb, and has narrow scope. In (11), na- attaches to the modal verb and has wide scope over the proposition. This point needs further research. With the presence of “lâzam” in (10), the negation of the proposition renders a prohibitive reading. Contrariwise, the negation of the modal expression “lâzam” in (11) rather than the proposition renders an obligation reading.

(10) Lâzam n-ay-i yâna zi.

Necessary NEG-come-2SG home early.

It is necessary not to come home early.

(11) Lâzam naw-â bay.i yâna zi.

Necessary NEG-PRES come.2SG home early.

It is not necessary to come home early.

The modal verb used to express the corresponding negative deontic modality, i.e. prohibition, is ‘naku’ in (12). ‘Naku’ is also polysemous and may be used to express warning and threat. It may also be used as a conjunction to express ‘lack of purpose’ and may have the meaning of ‘lest’ in English.

(12) Naku drang bali yâna.

Must.not late go.PRES-2SG home.

You mustn’t go home late.

(15b) above may be uttered as a negative command (i.e. ‘I order you not to tell lies’) or an assertion (i.e. ‘Moral honesty requires you not to tell lies’). In both cases it remains a deontic modality (cf Holmberg, 1979).

3.4. Advice and recommendation

In its directive sense, to advise a course of action is to suggest that someone perform that action while presupposing that it would be good for him to do it (Vanderveken 1990:197). In this sense, the verb ‘advise’ is followed by a nominalized verb or an infinitive. To recommend is to advise while presupposing that the future action recommended is good in general, and not only for the hearer. When one recommends a person or thing to a hearer, one recommends that he favors that person or thing (Vanderveken 1990:197). The direct object of recommend is usually an object, person or action.

The modal expressions of advice and recommendation (alet xâstarâ, am mâç-I, ba qasam kar, aga ba qasam makari, xozgi + past verb in 16-19 respectively) indicate that the proposition complies with social norms or general practicality. Since norms usually deal with how one is to behave in a situation, the lexical verb is normally agentive, and refers to the future (cf Teleman et al. 1999: 292-301), as in (16-19). Also, an utterance containing the present form verba decendi verb of

recover his health. The sentence in (13b) expresses external obligation. This interpretation of ‘majbur’ is similar to the modal expression “lâzam”. The only difference is that ‘majbur’ indicates a more categorical demand than “lâzam”. Thus, ‘majbur’ is more authoritative than “lâzam”.

Deontic statements refer to the effect that obligation exists and the words “xâs” and “xarâ” in (14 a & b) specify the nature of obligation. The example in (15a) is a directive which creates an obligation in this specific situation and hence the obligation is relative to the context of situation. In (15b), “lâzam” is used to express moral obligation which is absolutely applicable to all situations.

(14) a. Xâs na-wâ dro dâ.

Good NEG-be.PRES lie giving.

It is not good to telling lies.

(14) b. Xarâb.â dro dâ.

Bad.be.PRES lies giving.

It is bad to tell lies.

(15) a. Dro na-da.

Lie NEG-give.

Do not tell lies.

(15) b. Lâzam dro na-di.

Must lie NEG-give.

You must not tell lies.

(18) b. Aga ba qasam makari alâ-t xâstar-â (aga)
bal-i zi.

If to saying-1SG.POSS do.PRES for-2SG better-
BE.PRES (if) go-2SG early

I recommend that it is better for you to leave
early / if you leave early.

(19) a. Xozgi bal-et zi, alâ-t xâstar-â.

Wish go-2SG early for-2SG better-BE.PRES

I wish you went early, it is better for you.

(19) b. Xozgi nal-et zi, alâ-t xâs na-wâ.

Wish NEG-go-2SG early for-2SG better NEG-
BE.PRES

I wish you did not go early, it is not good for you.

3.5. Promises

According to Vanderveken (1990:182), a promise is always made to someone (it is essentially hearer directed) and has the special preparatory condition to the effect that it is good for the hearer. Moreover, it involves a special kind of commitment, namely the explicit undertaking of an obligation. The three sentences in (20) represent a spectrum of speaker's seriousness which is least in (20a) and highest in (20c) and middling in (20b). The force of the promise is usually strengthened in terms of seriousness or insistence by swear words such as 'wallah' (by God) added to the beginning of the

saying in Shabaki is often understood as a rather strict, moralizing advice or recommendation, which the speaker expects will be carried out. 'Xozgi', on the other hand, indicates a softer, less moralizing recommendation the speaker does not necessarily believe will be carried out. In addition, 'xozgi' has a hypothetical, unreal, or nonfactual interpretation, i.e. "the speaker is aware of the fact that the reality is contrary to the norm" as in (19). 'Aga' is an optional element in sentence (16). The following sentences in (16-19) are ambiguous in that they may have two readings: both advising and recommending. This ambiguity is created by the fact that syntactically these expressions are used both for advising and recommending.

(16) Ale-t xâstarâ aga bal-i zi.

For-2SG good go-PRES-2SG early.

It is good for you to leave early.

(17) Am mâç-i alâ-t xâstar-â (aga) bal-i zi.

1SG.NOM say.PRES-1SG for-2SG better (if)
go-2SG early

I recommend that it is better for you to leave
early / if you leave early.

(18) a. Ba qasam kar alâ-t xâstar-â (aga) bal-i zi.

To saying-1SG.POSS do.PRES for-2SG better
(if) go-2SG early

I recommend that it is better for you to leave
early / if you leave early.

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(21) b. Lâzam frâ pek-i-t.

Must a lot beat.PRES-2SG

I must beat you a lot.

(21) c. Naku bay indâ nâqçe.

Warn come-2SG have again

I warn you not to come here again.

(21) d. Tarâ mâsti-t qas-a kar-I çani het. (threat)

Else let-2SG talk make (LV) with yourself

I will else let you talk to your self.

‘Naku’ can also express a premonition or foreboding that something negative or bad may happen as in the sentence in (22). ‘Naku’ in (22) means ‘I am afraid that.’

(22) Dasman-at naku bay-o.

Enemy-3SG.POSS afraid come-2SG

I am afraid that your enemy may come.

‘Naqu’ (and ‘mugu’) can precede negated verbs in which case they indicate promised threat. They both express a prior determination or plan. ‘Mugu’ and ‘naqu’ in Shabaki seems to express attitude or opinion of the speaker.

(23) Naqu na-i yâna? Ala piki-t.

Will not-come.INF.3SG home? I will certainly beat you.

Won't you come home? I will certainly beat you.

sentence. Anyhow the order in this spectrum is not sensitive to any lexical change. Both ‘naqu’ and ‘alla’ in (20a) and (20c) respectively indicate an action in future but they differ in the degree of insistence of the speaker to perform the action in the promise proposition. ‘Alla’ is an expression which commits the speaker the action of the proposition. The speaker seems more serious and insistent when he uses ‘alla.’

(20) a. Naqu bad-i-t duwa hazâr-e aga amâ-yit.

Shall give.1SG.2SG two hundred if come.PRES.
PERF-2SG

I shall give you two hundreds if you have come.

(20) b. Mad-i-t duwa hazâr-e aga amâ-yit.

Give.1SG-NOM.2SG-ACC two hundred if
come.PRES.PERF-2SG

I shall give you two hundreds if you have come.

(20) c. Alla bad-i-t duwa hazâr-e.

Certainly, give.FUT-1SG-2SG two hundred

I will certainly give you two hundreds if you have come.

3.6. Threats

(21) a. Alla frâ pek-i-t.

Certainly a lot beat.PRES-2SG

I assure you I will beat you a lot.

lexical and grammatical resources (e.g. 'alla', 'di', di .. day', 'mugu', 'naqu' and 'naku') to express deontic modality. They tend to appear at the beginning of sentences in order to announce speaker's opinion or attitude and that the sentences are no longer objective. Nevertheless, modal particles go beyond signaling the notion of the speaker's opinion or attitude because some of them can be used to mark various deontic meanings.

Notes

1. Deontic modals are often regarded vague with respect to the subject orientation, i.e. it is more or less understood whether the duty, obligation or permission is associated with the subject referent (in directed deontic interpretation) or with the proposition as a whole (in non-directed deontic interpretation). Both potential and intentional modals are almost always subject-oriented (Teleman et al. 1999: 282-284).
2. Â â as in *apple*; A a as in *about*; Ç ç as in *church*; S s as in *shoe*; Ž ž as in *vision*; X x as in *Loch* (in Scottish). The voiceless uvular fricative in English, G g, corresponds a voiced uvular fricative in Shabaki. The voiced and the voiceless pharyngeal fricatives replace *a* and *h* in some Shabaki words respectively. The last two sounds are not part of Shabaki's phonology.

(24) Aga na-y, naqu pek-i-t.

If NEG.come.2SG, will beat.BASE.2SG

If you do not come, I will beat you.

A final point worth mentioning is the fact that 'alla', 'naqu' and 'mugu' express undertaking and are modal particles of futurity which indicate emphasis and insistence. The main difference between these two particles in Shabaki is that the first is considered friendlier than the second. 'Naqu' and 'mugu' can be used in unfriendly situations to express challenge.

4. Conclusions

This paper seeks to bring novel data from Shabaki to bear on the debate in linguistic literature over one of the most hotly-debated topic in semantics, i.e. modality and consequently to provide an analysis of the full range of deontic modality in Shabaki on semantic grounds and to identify linguistic devices that can be considered carriers of deontic meaning in this language. These expressions were categorized semantically based on their interpretations and their expression of modal concepts of permission, prohibition, obligation, advice and recommendation, promises and threats. The behavior of deontic modal expressions generally seems too erratic with respect to negation. All deontic expressions in Shabaki were polysemous. Shabaki uses a wide selection of

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3. The abbreviations for the glosses and attributes used in this paper are 1 = First person, 2 = Second person, 3 = Third person, ACC = Accusative, AUX = Auxiliary, CAUS = Causative, CONJ = Conjunction, DAT = Dative, DEF = Definite, Ez(afe) = A morpheme used to express relation, FUT = Future, GEN = Genitive, IMPF = Imperfective, IND = Indefinite, INF = Infinitive, LV = Light verb, LVC = Light verb construction, NEG = Negation, Nom = Nominal, Ono = onomatopoeic, PL = Plural, PPL = Participle, PRST = Present, PST = Past, PV = Pre-verb, REFL = Reflexive, SG = Singular, VP = Verbal phrase.

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